

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for helping to protect an occupant of a vehicle that has a side structure and a roof, said apparatus comprising:

an inflatable curtain that is inflatable away from the roof between the side structure of the vehicle and a vehicle occupant, said inflatable curtain having an inflatable volume;

an inflator actuatable to provide inflation fluid for inflating said inflatable curtain and having a diffuser;

a first fill tube having a portion positioned in a first portion of said inflatable volume;

a second fill tube having a portion positioned in a second portion of said inflatable volume; and

an inflation fluid distribution manifold clamped to said diffuser ~~and threadily connectable with said first and second fill tubes~~, said manifold receiving inflation fluid flow from said diffuser and comprising a first flow orifice that directs inflation fluid to flow into said first fill tube at a first flow rate and a second flow orifice that directs inflation to fluid flow into said second fill tube at a second flow rate different than said first flow rate rate;

a first compression fitting connecting said first fill tube to said manifold, said first compression fitting comprising a cap threaded onto said manifold and compressing surfaces of said manifold and said first fill tube together; and

a second compression fitting connecting said second fill tube to said manifold, said second compression fitting comprising a cap threaded onto said manifold and compressing surfaces of said manifold and said second fill tube together.

2. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 1, wherein said manifold comprises:

a main fluid passage;

a collar portion connectable with said inflator to provide fluid communication between said inflator and said main fluid passage;

a first distribution portion connectable with said first fill tube, said first distribution portion providing fluid communication between said first fill tube and said main fluid passage, said first distribution portion including said first flow orifice; and

a second distribution portion connectable with said second fill tube, said second distribution portion providing fluid communication between said second fill tube and said main fluid passage, said second distribution portion including said second flow orifice.

3. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 2, wherein said inflator comprises a container and an outlet assembly, said outlet assembly comprising an outlet flow area and means actuatable to release inflation fluid to flow from said container

through said outlet flow area, said collar portion being connectable with said outlet assembly to provide fluid communication between said main fluid passage and said outlet flow area.

4. (Previously Presented) The apparatus recited in claim 3, wherein said outlet assembly comprises said diffuser having a generally cylindrical configuration, said collar portion having a generally cylindrical surface for mating with and clamping onto said diffuser to connect said manifold to said inflator.

5. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 4, wherein said outlet flow area of said outlet assembly comprises first and second outlet apertures positioned radially opposite each other about said diffuser, said main fluid passage being positioned adjacent said first outlet aperture when said collar portion is connected with said diffuser, said collar portion including a protuberance positioned opposite said main fluid passage and extendable into said second outlet aperture when said collar portion is connected with said diffuser.

6. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 2, wherein said collar portion comprises:

a first collar part having an inner surface;

a second collar part separate from said first collar part, said second collar part having an inner surface; and

fastening means for connecting said first and second collar parts with each other, said inner surfaces of said first and second collar parts together defining

a clamping surface of said collar portion when said first and second collar parts are connected with each other.

7. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 6, wherein said clamping surface extends around and clamps onto an outer surface of said inflator when said first and second collar parts are connected with each other.

8. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 6, wherein each of said inner surfaces of said first and second collar parts has a generally semi-cylindrical configuration, said clamping surface having a generally cylindrical configuration when said first and second collar parts are connected with each other.

9. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 2, wherein said manifold has a generally T-shaped configuration, said main fluid passage extending along a first axis, said first and second distribution portions extending in opposite directions along a second axis perpendicular to said first axis from a first end of said main fluid passage.

10. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 9, wherein said collar portion comprises:

a first collar part formed at a second end of said main fluid passage opposite said first end, said first collar part having a semi-cylindrical inner surface;

a second collar part separate from said first collar part, said second collar part having a semi-cylindrical inner surface; and

fastening means for connecting said first and second collar parts with each other, said semi-cylindrical surfaces of said first and second collar parts together defining a cylindrical inner surface of said collar portion when said first and second collar parts are connected with each other.

11. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 10, wherein said first collar part includes an aperture that provides fluid communication with said main fluid passage through said inner surface of said first collar portion.

12. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 11, wherein said inflator comprises first and second outlet apertures positioned opposite each other, said aperture of said first collar part being positioned adjacent said first outlet aperture when said collar portion is connected with said inflator, said second part including a protuberance extendable into said second outlet aperture when said collar portion is connected with said inflator.

13. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 2, wherein said manifold has a generally S-shaped configuration, said main fluid passage having a first portion extending from said collar portion in a first direction along a first axis, said main fluid passage having a second portion extending from said collar portion in a second direction opposite said first direction along said first axis, said first distribution portion extending perpendicularly from an end of said first portion of said main fluid passage opposite said collar portion, said second distribution portion extending

perpendicularly from an end of said second portion of said main fluid passage opposite said collar portion.

14. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 13, wherein said collar portion comprises:

a first collar part formed at an end of said first portion of said main fluid passage opposite said first distribution portion, said first collar part having a semi-cylindrical inner surface;

a second collar part separate from said first collar part, said second collar part being formed at an end of said second portion of said main fluid passage opposite said first distribution portion, said second collar part having a semi-cylindrical inner surface; and

fastening means for connecting said first and second collar parts with each other, said semi-cylindrical surfaces of said first and second collar parts together defining a cylindrical inner surface of said collar portion when said first and second collar parts are connected with each other.

15. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 14, wherein said first collar part includes an aperture that provides fluid communication with said first portion of said main fluid passage through said inner surface of said first collar portion, and said second collar part includes an aperture that provides fluid communication with said second portion of said main fluid passage through said inner surface of said second collar portion.

16. (Previously Presented) The apparatus recited in claim 15, wherein said inflator comprises first and second outlet apertures positioned opposite each other, said aperture of said first collar part being positioned adjacent said first outlet aperture when said collar portion is clamped onto said inflator, said aperture of said second collar part being positioned adjacent said second outlet aperture when said collar portion is clamped onto said inflator.

17. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 2, wherein said first distribution portion directs said inflation fluid in a first direction and said second distribution portion directs said inflation fluid in a second direction, opposite said first direction.

18. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 1, said inflator comprises an outlet portion for releasing inflation fluid to flow from said inflator, said manifold comprising a collar portion connectable with said outlet portion of said inflator.

19. (Currently Amended) An inflation fluid distribution manifold for directing inflation fluid from an inflator to an inflatable curtain inflatable away from a vehicle roof between a side structure of the vehicle and a vehicle occupant, said manifold comprising:

a collar portion comprising first and second collar parts each having an inner surface and at least a flange portion, said flange portion of said first collar part facing said flange portion of said second collar part, said first and second collar parts being connectable with each other at the flange portions such that said inner

surfaces encircle and engage an outlet portion of the inflator to clamp said collar portion onto the outlet portion of the inflator;

a main fluid passage in fluid communication with an inflation fluid outlet of the outlet portion while said collar portion is clamped onto the outlet portion of the inflator, said first collar part including an aperture that provides fluid communication with said main fluid passage through said inner surface of said first collar portion;

a first distribution passage in fluid communication with said main fluid passage, said first distribution passage comprising a first flow orifice that directs inflation fluid to flow into the inflatable curtain at a first flow rate; and

a second distribution passage in fluid communication with said main fluid passage, said second distribution passage comprising a second flow orifice that directs inflation fluid to flow into the inflatable curtain at a second flow rate different than said first flow rate.

20. (Original) The apparatus recited in claim 19, wherein said inner surfaces of said first and second collar parts combine to form a cylindrical clamping surface of said collar portion, said cylindrical clamping surface being in continuous engagement with a cylindrical outer surface of said outlet portion of said inflator while said collar portion is clamped onto the outlet of the inflator.

21. (Currently Amended) The apparatus recited in claim 19, wherein said first collar part has another flange, said flanges of said first collar part being positioned on opposite sides of said outlet portion, said second collar part having

another flange, said flanges of said second collar part being positioned on opposite sides of said outlet portion and facing said flanges of said first collar part.

22. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 21, ~~wherein said further comprising screws that extend through said flanges of said first and second collar parts flanges facing each other are fastened together by a screw~~, said screws drawing together said first and second collar parts to cause said inner surfaces to encircle and clamp onto the outlet portion of the inflator.

23. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said manifold has a generally T-shaped configuration, said main fluid passage extending along a first axis, said first and second distribution portions extending in opposite directions along a second axis perpendicular to said first axis from a first end of said main fluid passage.

24. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 20, wherein said manifold has a generally S-shaped configuration, said main fluid passage having a first portion extending from said collar portion in a first direction along a first axis, said main fluid passage having a second portion extending from said collar portion in a second direction opposite said first direction along said first axis, said first distribution portion extending perpendicularly from an end of said first portion of said main fluid passage opposite said collar portion, said second distribution portion extending perpendicularly from an end of said second portion of said main fluid passage opposite said collar portion.

25. (New) The apparatus of claim 19, further comprising a screw extending through said flange portions and drawing together said first and second collar parts to cause said inner surfaces to encircle and clamp onto the outlet portion of the inflator.

26. (New) An inflation fluid distribution manifold for directing inflation fluid from an inflator to an inflatable curtain inflatable away from a vehicle roof between a side structure of the vehicle and a vehicle occupant, said manifold comprising:

a collar portion comprising first and second collar parts each having an inner surface and first and second flange portions on opposite sides of said inner surface, said first flange portion of said first collar part facing said first flange portion of said second collar part, said second flange portion of said first collar part facing said second flange portion of said second collar part, said first flange portions being connectable with each other and said second flange portions being connectable with each other such that said inner surfaces encircle and engage an outlet portion of the inflator to clamp said collar portion onto the outlet portion of the inflator, said outlet portion being positioned between said first flange portions and said second flange portions;

a main fluid passage in fluid communication with an inflation fluid outlet of the outlet portion while said collar portion is clamped onto the outlet portion of the inflator, said first collar part including an aperture that provides fluid communication with said main fluid passage through said inner surface of said first collar portion;

a first distribution passage in fluid communication with said main fluid passage, said first distribution passage comprising a first flow orifice that directs inflation fluid to flow into the inflatable curtain at a first flow rate; and

a second distribution passage in fluid communication with said main fluid passage, said second distribution passage comprising a second flow orifice that directs inflation fluid to flow into the inflatable curtain at a second flow rate different than said first flow rate.